

## **Louise Line**

A periodic update from the front lines in Congress  
June 22, 2005  
[www.louise.house.gov](http://www.louise.house.gov)

### **Fighting to Maintain Public Broadcasting**

Contained within a recent House appropriations bill was a Republican attempt to eliminate \$100 million in funding for CPB, the non-profit corporation which provides a great deal of funding for PBS, NPR, and other public media organizations. These cuts would have damaged programming that has brought generations of Americans high quality educational programs like Sesame Street and remarkable characters like Mr. Rogers. A fair and independent source for news and analysis of the issues confronting our nation and world in the form of established programs like The News Hour with Jim Lehrer was also threatened.

Congresswoman Slaughter led the Democratic charge against this stipulation of the bill, speaking at a press conference to publicize the cuts and delivering a floor speech in defense of public broadcasting. On June 24<sup>th</sup>, an amendment to the appropriations bill was passed by the House, restoring the lost funding.

Louise is committed to defending the children's programming which PBS brings to millions of American families every day, along with the insights and free education which it and NPR provide across America. She will continue to fight against any attempts to eliminate public broadcasting from the nation's airwaves.

Ms. Slaughter will also work to ensure that CPB will never succumb to partisan pressure in the hopes of making it abandon its core, non-partisan identity. For this reason, she has and will oppose the efforts of current CPB president Kenneth Tomlinson to politicize PBS through the hiring of individuals excessively entangled with the Republican party, such as Patricia Harrison, the former Republican National Committee Co-Chairwoman who was recently chosen as CPB's chief executive officer.

### **Launching an "Online BRAC Resource Center" to Keep Constituents Up-to-Date**

The administration's recent Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) initiative has proposed the closure of the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station. Rep. Slaughter realizes the degree to which such a closure would damage the region's economy and quality of life. From the first announcement of BRAC's list of base closures, Louise has fought against its inclusion of the Niagara Station. To further her efforts, she recently launched a website which will track news related to BRAC so that the people of upper and western New York can keep themselves informed of any and all developments related to this critical issue. This website can be found at [www.louise.house.gov/brac](http://www.louise.house.gov/brac).

Additionally, Rep. Slaughter recently put an amendment before the House which would have forced the BRAC committee to reconsider its list of base closures in light of certain homeland security concerns. Although she gained a significant level of bipartisan support for the amendment, the House ultimately voted against it. Rep. Slaughter will continue to work against the committee's proposed closing of the Niagara Air Reserve Station and in support of a reconciliation of the BRAC committee's concerns with the needs of her constituents.

### **Bringing Home \$12.5 Million for Local Business in the 28<sup>th</sup> District**

With the passage of the most recent House Department of Defense appropriations bill, Rep. Slaughter secured \$12.5 million in funds for local projects. The funding will directly benefit the work of companies in Western New York and will give the area economy a strong boost. This new regional economic development will be especially significant because many of the companies set to benefit work on defense and reconstruction projects benefiting US troops and civilians abroad.

"I am pleased that this money will be going to so many deserving companies right here in our own backyard," Rep. Slaughter said at a press conference to announce the funding. "This is a testament to the fine work they are doing, not just in making our country more secure but also seeing to it that our troops have the tools they need to be better prepared and protected," she added.

The companies receiving the \$12.5 million are QED Technologies of Rochester, the Center for Optics Manufacturing of Rochester, Dimension Technologies of Rochester, and Buffalo Bio Blower of Buffalo.

## **Defending Ethical Standards in the House of Representatives**

It has long been a tradition for members of the House to be able to file complaints against fellow members in the case of questionable ethical activities. The House Ethics Committee serves as the arbiter of all ethical complaints, and is a vital part of the fight to keep Congress accountable and transparent.

However, as ethics complaints mounted against Majority Leader Tom DeLay in the 108<sup>th</sup> congress and persisted into the 109<sup>th</sup>, Republicans declared war on the ethics process, seeking to eliminate the possibility that DeLay could be held accountable for his actions. They started by using their majority position to change the rules that governed the ethics process, making the investigations of ethics complaints more difficult. They have now attempted to politicize what is supposed to be a non-partisan committee by eliminating objective, professional staffers and members who refuse to toe the party line and replacing them with those who will. Just recently, Doc Hastings, the new chairman of the committee, has proposed filling a vacant staff position with his own personal assistant, an individual whose impartiality has, for obvious reasons, yet to be demonstrated. As a result of the Republicans' refusal to return the Committee to its functional state before their assault began, it has been frozen for months, unable to investigate any of the numerous ethics claims waiting to be examined.

Rep. Slaughter has been a Democratic leader in the fight to restore the Ethics Committee to its previous form. "The Republican Majority will do everything in their power to bend the Ethics Committee into submission," she said recently on the topic. "Enough is enough. The Committee deserves more than partisan political power plays."

As long as Republicans continue to publicly belittle ethics complaints filed against them while simultaneously working to change the rules and committee under which these complaints are considered, Rep. Slaughter will lead the battle in defense of ethics and morality in the House.

## **Demanding an Inquiry into Possible Government Abuse of the Media**

Rep. Slaughter has tirelessly continued to fight for fairness and balance in America's media. She has long requested that there be an

investigation into the Bush administration's payments and relationships to media and public relations entities, an issue all the more pressing in the wake of the Jeff Gannon-White House reporting scandal. She is pleased to announce that, after much pressure from the Democratic leadership of the House, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) will soon launch an investigation into known ties between the White House and numerous media organizations. Louise will work to ensure that the non-partisan exploration will help to restore the credibility of our media and show the administration that the American public will not tolerate a government that covertly disseminates propaganda.

### **Expanding NEXUS to Facilitate Easier Travel and Trade**

Congresswoman Slaughter has long promoted the NEXUS border security plan as an alternative to President Bush's passport-centered plan, which, if implemented, would have made frequent travel and trade between the U.S. and Canada unnecessarily difficult. She is therefore delighted to announce that two NEXUS Amendments to the Homeland Security Authorization Bill were debated and passed by the full House in May. The first amendment expands the NEXUS program, authorizing the creation of at least four enrollment centers in the U.S. It also establishes a customer service phone number to resolve issues over the phone rather than through an office visit, which saves both time and resources. The second amendment, designed to heighten border security, requires the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to submit a report to Congress on the agency's efforts to improve the design of its badges, uniforms, or other insignia in order to reduce the ability of counterfeiters to produce phony imitations.

### **Continuing Calls for a New Truman Commission**

In early 2005, a report issued by the Special Inspector General for the Iraqi Reconstruction found that \$9 billion spent on the Iraqi reconstruction was unaccounted for. Numerous reports released since then have indicated a severe lack of transparency in the way this administration has dealt with the post-war development of Iraq. In the most recent revelation, investigations disclosed that Rep. Duke Cunningham (R-CA) sold his house to a military contractor at an inflated price in exchange for granting the company lucrative government contracts. The company, MZM, is connected with military

support services critical to the safety and success of American troops in Iraq.

Rep. Slaughter believes that the rampant war profiteering and the lack of accountability which have plagued the U.S. efforts in Iraq are unconscionable. Every dollar that is lost to shady accounting practices or unadulterated greed is a dollar that could have helped the war effort and defended American troops from harm. Louise has therefore publicly called for a congressional commission to conduct a comprehensive audit of all financial and military transactions taking place in the Iraqi arena. She recently stated that she was "disappointed by the refusal of the majority in this House to aggressively pursue the mismanagement and fraud which is sapping the resources from the very soldiers we are charged to support and protect." Ms. Slaughter calls for this audit in the spirit of the Truman Commission of World War II, a commission established by President Truman that closely monitored wartime financial dealings in order to eliminate any government waste or corruption that might hamper the war effort or endanger the troops.

### **Increasing Arts & Humanities Funding Nationally and Locally**

Rep. Slaughter has always understood that supporting the arts is one of the most important challenges the government can take on, and has spent her career actively pursuing and defending arts funding.

This past May, Louise sponsored and helped pass a congressional amendment guaranteeing an increase of \$10 million for the National Endowment for the Arts and \$5 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities on the national level. The bill will help schools and community organizations in Rochester to be eligible for more money in support of their local arts programs. Rep. Slaughter will continue to advocate for increased federal support and funding of the arts and humanities, both in Western New York and throughout America.

### **Winning Funding and Support for Cancer Research and Local Treatment**

In May, Rep. Slaughter secured \$750,000 for the University of Rochester and the James P. Wilmot Cancer Center. The funding will assist the University in supporting its comprehensive cancer research and care facility, which serves patients in upstate and central New

York. In order to secure this funding, Rep. Slaughter worked in bipartisan collaboration with Representatives Tom Reynolds (R-Clarence), Randy Kuhl (R-Hammondsport) and Jim Walsh (R-Onondaga). Louise was grateful to have had the opportunity to work with fellow representatives from both sides of the isle on such an important project, one which will greatly benefit the health and well-being of the people of the 28<sup>th</sup> district and beyond.